

# LONESTAR NEWS

SPECIAL TROOPS BATTALION, 2BCT, 4ID  
FOB KALSU, IRAQ



October 2006



## *Words from Lone Star 6*

Ahlen (Hello),

As I write this final newsletter of our deployment, I find myself in bittersweet recollection of a year filled with extremely hard work done by the Lonestars, mixed with the tremendous sacrifice made by our Soldiers spent away from their loved ones. The ultimate sacrifice made by nearly 50 Soldiers in the Warhorse Brigade is what I find hardest to wrestle with. I know not a day will go by where we don't think of our fallen comrades and wish they were redeploying with us.

I distinctly remember writing to you in November 2005, with such major prospects facing us, a yearlong deployment of doing the job we signed up to do, yet away from our families and friends. So much has happened since then it is hard to recount it all, but I am sure we will try for a long time to come.

October proved to be our busiest month yet, as we focused mainly on redeployment, but also managed to continue to complete our mission without faltering. Between packing to go home and doing all of the necessary paperwork to get our Soldiers set up for success upon redeployment, we ran missions to Baghdad, missions with the Iraqi Army, and daily missions on the FOB. Our Soldiers pressed on with renewed hope and drive toward that light at the end of the tunnel.

Even more uplifting to everyone's spirits was seeing the unit come in that is replacing us. As the Soldiers from Alaska started showing up, I was particularly proud to see how our Soldiers received them with open arms and open minds of passing on all of our lessons learned here in Iraq. I tell our Soldiers that what we have done in the past 11 months does not end with us, it needs to be passed on to our brothers in arms. How well we train and prepare our replacements is a true testament to the unit we are and means just as much as what we have done in the past year. All of our unit, from our most junior Soldiers to our highest leaders, have truly done their best and grown so much over the past year. I know that we have extraordinary knowledge that we can and will pass on.

October wasn't all work and no play, as several Soldiers on the FOB participated in the Army 10 Miler.



One of the final sunsets for the STB to enjoy in Iraq

### **October Promotions**

1LT Townsell (B Co)  
SSG Meghan Malloy (HHC)  
SSG Todd Mattila (HHC)  
SPC Jordan Darrington (A Co)  
SGT Michael Roosendaal (A Co)  
SPC Strayhorn (B Co)  
SPC Santana (HHC)  
PFC Lewis (HHC)



A Co Soldiers smiling after the Army 10 Miler

This colossal event is held in Washington, D.C. annually, however, as we could not easily send our Soldiers to the States, we decided to do our own deployed version. The STB, in true Lonestar fashion, had an incredible showing, with the largest amount of participants from the Brigade coming from the smallest battalion. The Stalkers had a big representation with SGT Frohberg and SGT Holland winning the female competition for their age group. Other runners from the battalion placed extremely well, including our own Lonestar 5, Major Craft, coming in top ten overall, and not just in the “old weenies” category. Overall, it was just further proof that our battalion can do anything they set their minds to and do it with honor and distinction (despite not being able to walk for a few days).

As our days wind down here, I look at all we have accomplished, but mainly that we could not have accomplished it without the help of so many people. I would like to personally thank all of the families and friends of the Lonestar team. Our loved ones at home were truly the guiding light throughout the last year. Also, all of the units that we have been honored to work with – we could not have done it without them. Our two fellow MiTTs, 821 led by LTC Boyd, and 822 led by MAJ McCardell, were two spectacular units that we were honored to work beside during this past year. Working with the Iraqi Army was an experience that we will never forget and always treasure. Admiration for the other battalions of the Warhorse Brigade only grew over the past year, as we worked side by side across the battlefield.

As I mentioned, as our first group of Soldiers return to Fort Hood, I think back on so much that has happened this year. Arriving in Kuwait, we faced long lines for the DFAC and even longer lines to the phones to call home to tell our families we had arrived. After intense training, we moved north and settled in at our bases. We began our deployment with cold, rain and mud – hail the size of baseballs threatening to puncture our miniature tent that doubled as our tactical operations center. Did I mention there was mud? Christmas and New Years Eve was celebrated surrounding a burn barrel with “near beer”. Summer came early (and stayed late) as the temperatures quickly rose to nearly 130 degrees. The 4<sup>th</sup> of July seems like years ago when STB won the Commander’s Cup in a blazing display of teamwork. I remember the joy on the Soldiers’ faces as they left for leave and returned rested and relaxed. August and September flew by as we neared the end yet still had so much ahead of us to accomplish.

We are not done with our mission. Our mission does not end until we bring each Soldier home safely and *stay* safe upon redeployment. Once we are home, how we reintegrate into garrison life will be what others will see and use to deem our deployment a success or not. Let’s continue to fight as a team and get the job done.

First In!

*LTC R. J. Muraski Jr.*

*“Lonestar 6”*



PFC Ganaway, a Signal Company Soldier, receives a Brigade Commander’s Coin of Excellence



SGT London receives his end of tour award



LT Kasper and CPT Carter enjoy a visit with local Iraqi schoolchildren



## HHC Hurricanes

October was a busy month for the Hurricane Company. We started off with the Hurricane Warrior Olympics, in which our Soldiers had to compete in various weapon disassembly, assembly, and marksmanship. Conducted over a three week time period from mid September to October 6th, the Warrior Olympics provided our Soldiers a chance to retrain in vital weapons skills 45 days prior to redeployment, when Soldiers tend to lose combat focus and become distracted. Specialist Woolum from the Food Service Section, Support Platoon, won the coveted company championship with a total score of 665 out of possible 1000 points. The best Soldier from the Military Police platoon was Private First Class Swank, with 485 points. Private First Class Johnson was the best Soldier from the headquarters platoon, with 505 points total. The Warrior Olympics culminated with two moving platform live fire exercises, in which the humvee gunners had to engage targets while the humvee was moving. Sergeant Porras, Specialist Woolum, Private First Class Graves, and Private First Class Kant were some of our best gunners who participated in the high pay-off training event.

On the eighth of October, the Hurricane Company fielded four relay teams of five runners each for the Kalsu Caliente Army 10 miler run. Held on the same day that the Army Ten Miler run was held in Washington DC, Hurricane runners did extremely well. Major Craft and Captain Park entered the event as individual runners to round out the four teams participating.

On the 16th of October we sent out our first group of Soldiers back to Texas. For the rest of our time here, we will be returning in incrementally larger groups, until we are 100% back in Texas, prior to Thanksgiving. Until we see you again, we will remain focused on our mission and taking care of our Soldiers so that we can return with honor.



Firers in the Warrior Olympics



HHC Warriors take aim



HHC runners in the Army 10 Miler

## Alpha Company Stalkers

Dear Family, Friends & Soldiers of the Lonestars,

Congratulations to Stalker FRG Leader Mrs. Linda Watkins who was selected as the 4ID Volunteer of the Month of October 2006! I am excited to finally be able to announce that we just sent the first Stalkers on their way back to Texas! SFC Lazaro and SPC Moore are headed home. It gets better – Soldiers and equipment from the unit replacing us have begun to show up!

Thirteen Stalkers participated in the Kalsu Caliente 10 Miler, in honor of the Army 10 Miler ran every October in the Nation's Capital; SGT Darrington, SPC Gomez, PFC Park, SGT Thompson, SFC Lacny, SGT Hendrickson, SGT Choi, LT Kasper, SPC Stubblefield, SPC Roosendaal, SGT Britney Holland, SGT Frohberg, and myself, CPT Prince. This is an indicator of the competitive edge of these Stalkers and the camaraderie as the Stalkers represented 13 of a total of 41, making up over 1/3 of all of the participants in the event! SGT Frohberg and SGT Holland ran together and tied for the first female finisher. SGT Choi in her first 10-Miler demonstrated intestinal fortitude and determination as she sprang her ankle and fell at mile 5. She could have stopped there and a lesser person would have...but not SGT Choi; she ran on to the finish. SGT Roosendaal was the fastest Stalker. PFC Park and PFC Bellinger of SIGINT Platoon were both awarded their Tan Belts in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program. PFC Park also earned his Grey belt while they both continue training towards the next level.

Two Stalkers were promoted to Sergeant; Sergeant's Darrington and Roosendaal are the newest Non-Commissioned Officers to step up to the plate.

Several Stalkers opted to continue their service to the Nation and to the Army this month as well. SPC Arons of TUAV re-enlisted for his hometown, Ft. Huachuca, Arizona; SPC Bennie Holland also re-enlisted for Ft. Huachuca; SPC Wisnewski opted to continue his service to his country in Korea and SPC Henderson re-enlisted to meet the requirements for an assignment to Hawaii. SGT Leban from Recon Platoon finally made the decision and is opting for continued service as well. SGT Harshner finalized his paperwork and re-enlistment ceremony will soon follow and other Stalkers are building up some frequent flyer miles on trips to the retention office.

I would like to take this chance to say thank you to our Navy and civilian counterparts in our efforts here in Iraq.

❖Our Document Exploitation Team has been headed by Naval Petty Officer First Class Brookins.

Kevin Brooks. He and his two interpreters work very hard on all the materials brought in to translate it and apply initial analysis to its authenticity. We are glad to have him as his products are a key ingredient here and have greatly helped out. Also they are the epitome of team players and always willing to help out. SSG Brooks team was recently joined by Air Force Lieutenant Justin Wold who has already shown his eagerness to become part of the team. Incidentally this past October 13th was the 231st birthday of the Navy! Happy Birthday Navy!

❖Paul Cano is the Field Service Rep (FSR) for the TUAVs and I do not like to think of where we would be without him. His help in getting parts and repairing air vehicles has truly allowed us to do our mission to support the Warhorse Brigade.

❖Gerry Freeman is the FOX Nuclear-Biological-Chemical, (NBC), Reconnaissance Vehicle FSR. He provides us all we could ever hope for and more in dealing with the FOX.

❖We also have 12 Interpreters that support Company operations. They are all U.S. citizens and three have a Top Secret clearance while the rest have Secret clearances so they work right alongside us. We've become quite close to them over our time in country and literally would be stopped dead in the water without them.

*Thank You for your support of these great Soldiers.*

**CPT Wayne Prince**  
**-STALKER 6**  
**ALWAYS OUT FRONT!**



Stalkers led all other units in participation in the Kalsu 10-Miler.



SPC Steward with local vendor



## ***Bravo Company Bulldogs***

Greetings everyone, it feels good knowing this will be the last newsletter written from Iraq. The Bulldog team has a lot to be proud of and thankful for this season. They did an outstanding job in less than optimum conditions to make newly fielded communications equipment work well and support communications for a Brigade. Their emphasis on safety resulted in no injuries despite hundreds of combat patrols and working daily in high heat and with the electricity needed to run their equipment. They continually sought out ways to improve the unit and participated this month in a week long, hands on JNN training exercise in which both platoons did extremely well. They also received and worked with their replacements, Soldiers from C 4/25, and prepared them for success when they take over the network next month. As families and friends of Bulldog Soldiers, you all have a lot to be proud of and we thank all of you for your support. I leave you with my gratitude for the service and sacrifice of these great Soldiers, and want to let my Platoon leaders describe in more detail, the events of this month.

### **First Platoon Leader, 1LT Peter Hoberg**

This past month has been quite eventful for 1st Platoon. We had been away from the rest of the company since December of 2005 at FOB Duke. We provided communications for the FOB all the way up to the final days that US troops were stationed there. 1st Platoon was present while the Iraqi Army moved in to take over responsibility of FOB Duke and the surrounding area of Najaf. Since arriving at FOB Kalsu at the beginning of this month, we took a week to take advantage of one final training opportunity on our JNN and KU band systems that we called JNN crew drills. This training gave troops one final chance to engage and train on the equipment that they will be very likely to see again in the future regardless of the units they wind up going to. Upon completion of the training, our efforts were turned completely to packing up our equipment to prepare it for transfer to incoming units and for shipment back to Ft. Hood.

The troops are very excited to be so close to going home, but have kept their heads in the game and will continue to do so until we are on an airplane heading for Texas. We have been overjoyed to see the rising number of airborne 25th Infantry Division patches around the FOB. We look forward to helping our replacements get adjusted to life in Iraq and to provide them with whatever they may need to take over the reigns in this continuing fight. 1st Platoon continues to do great things and should stand proud of all they have accomplished over the past year.

### **Second Platoon Leader, 1LT Adhana Townsell**

2nd Platoon Soldiers have been busy with inventories and packing for redeployment. They are eager to reunite with their families. The redeployment process has only fueled productivity as we work to ensure that we are prepared to go and 4/25 is ready for success. We have awarded the End of Tour awards to our ADVON party, SFC Cattle and SGT London. We also awarded Driver's badges to many of our Soldiers for their demonstrated safety skills on the road. Soldiers were also awarded with Battalion and Brigade coins and Good Conduct Medals. We are proud of what everyone has accomplished and look forward to seeing you all very soon at Fort Hood.

### **Final Thanks**

I just want to conclude by saying thanks to all the men and women of B Company for their service and dedication to our mission out here, and thanks to all of the families and friends who supported them. We look forward to seeing you all very soon.



SPC Allsopp receives a Brigade Commander's Coin of Excellence

